

Taking Medicines Correctly

Always be sure you know everything about a medicine before you take it. This information will help you get the full benefits from your medicine. It will also help you avoid taking too much or too little of a medicine. Taking medicine in the wrong way can make you worse instead of better.



Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist:

What is the name of the medicine? Is this the brand name or the generic name?

What is the medicine supposed to do?

How often and when do I take it--and for how long?

Are there any foods, drinks, other medicines, dietary supplements, or activities I should avoid while taking this medicine?

What are the possible side effects?

What should I do if they occur?

When should I see an improvement?

What written information is available about the medicine?

To keep track of the medicines you are taking, fill in the Medicine Minder ([PDF file](#), 22 KB, [PDF Help](#); [Text Version](#)). You may want to bring the chart with you when you go to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

[Your Medicine: Play It Safe](#) (AHRQ Publication No. 03-0019) gives practical tips on how to take medicines safely. To get a print copy, call the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Publications Clearinghouse at 1-800-358-9295 or E-mail at ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov.

Making Smart Choices About Sexual